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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Washington, DC 20423

Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis, and Administration

April 12, 2004

Lancaster County
Office of the County Commissioners
50 North Duke Street
P.O. Box 83480
Lancaster, PA 17608-3480

**Re: Docket No. AB - 167 (1095X), Consolidated Rail Corporation -
Abandonment Exemption - in Lancaster and Chester Counties,
Pennsylvania**

Dear Chairman Schaub, Vice Chairman Schellenberger, and Commissioner Henderson:

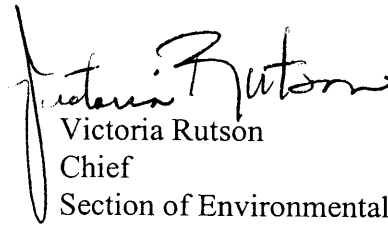
Thank you for your April 1, 2004 facsimile regarding the proposed abandonment of the Enola Branch rail line in Lancaster and Chester Counties, PA. I appreciate receiving a copy of your proposed draft "Principles for Intergovernmental Partnership Agreement." As you know, the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) has been conducting a review of the proposed abandonment of the Enola Branch rail line, pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). We are nearing the completion of that process, but some steps still remain before the Surface Transportation Board issues a final decision removing the Section 106 condition and permitting the abandonment to be consummated. The Board has stated that it favors privately negotiated settlements to disputes wherever possible. To that end, we hope that your discussions concerning the Enola Branch rail line are helpful to everyone in resolving the remaining issues.

Today, SEA issued the Notice to the Parties, which responds to all comments received in response to the October 2003 Notice and Draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), including those that favor converting this railroad right-of-way to trail use/railbanking pursuant to 16 U.S.C. 1247(d) (Trails Act), or a privately negotiated trail use agreement entered into after the abandonment is consummated, and presents the Final MOA, which sets forth measures for mitigating adverse effects of the proposed abandonment on historic properties. SEA has circulated the Final MOA to the signatory and concurring parties, including Lancaster County, for signature.

For your convenience, I have enclosed a copy of the Notice to the Parties, which provides an explanation of the steps remaining in the Section 106 process on page 2. SEA appreciates

your continued interest in this proceeding. If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to call me at (202) 565-1545, or Christa Dean of my staff at (202) 565-1606.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "V" and "R".

Victoria Rutson
Chief
Section of Environmental Analysis

Attachment